

The speakers on this tape are unidentified. The conversations were probably part of a Uintah County Historical Society meeting. No date is available.

I started back real early with this history. I've got it written out, but I don't think I'll read. Back in about 1907, this was before we needed any buses. I'm leading up to the point to where we did need buses. Stella tells me about the first little log-house school, that's my wife, that she went to. She had to walk two miles, that's quite a ways for a girl to walk. But it happened to be on the road in the good old days. These coal hoppers used to travel that road right up to the school. She was along the road there all the way up to the schoolhouse. They come along about 8:00 to go for their load of coal.

Woman: You're talking in the vicinity of Maeser Ward?

Speaker: Yes, Coal Mine Basin. The schoolhouse that they had was right there on that property that Mark Hall used to live on. Sterling Colton gave that piece of ground for them to build a little log schoolhouse. I don't know how big it was. I think it was one room to start with, then they built two, and that's where she went. It was quite a cold walk for a little kid to start out and walk two miles in the cold weather, real cold weather. She told about the kids coming in with their hands froze and the teacher would put their hands in cold water and try to thaw them out and dry their tears away. I'm sure this happened in a lot of communities. I'm very sure of that because we started out with this little log schoolhouse in nearly every community. It had to be close because the only way they had to go school was to walk or use horses or like that and old Dobbin couldn't get ya very far, so ya had to have maybe three or four miles and then you'd need another school, maybe five. This is the way it was.

The most of the places had this little old log schoolhouse. Then they grew from that to a better school. As the country grew, they needed bigger schools. Then they started to cooperate a little bit or build schools and do away with some of the little schools. They found that they had better schools. Now, this is what the school boards, that was their decisions mostly. I find they had some opposition in some communities, for, they claimed that if you take the school away from them, you'll just take the life of the community away. Maybe that's right in some places, but what are you gonna do?

After I'd read this over quite a lot I decided that the school board used pretty good judgement all the way through, right from the start, to handle these schools. They had to handle a lot. Their object was to get better schools, that's what they tried to do. I find over on the west side [of Uintah County], a lot of articles in the minutes where they'd come over and a little later when they got students that were ready for high school, it created another problem. They didn't have a high school very close at all. They had to transport them, oh, twenty-five or twenty miles, like that, see. I'm talking about Tridell and Randlett and all those places. They either had to go to Vernal or to Roosevelt for their high school. They got their district school and there's where their problem started. So they started running some buses, putting some buses on there and they'd let the parents pay. It suggested here \$10 a year, \$20 a year, up as high as \$30 a year. They'd pay half of that at the beginning of school and half at the end of the first semester.

Woman: What year are you talking about now?

Speaker: Along in before '25, like in '20 or '25. Then they put on some trucks over there in those schools. One went to Jensen and one went to Randlett and Leeton and off up to Lapoint and Tridell. They started, I read in the minutes where they agreed with one fellow to put on trucks. I don't know what those trucks were like, but in 1927, Byron Thomas had a contract to put on a truck. I talked with one of the boys that rode this truck. It was just an old truck that they'd put a canvas over some boughs then hung a canvas behind with a pole on the bottom to hold the canvas down. But when the truck started to move, the canvas would move back and the dust would boil in behind. You know the story, it would actually make some of the kids sick. Little rough way to go to school, not quite as good as old Dobbin, but you couldn't get that far with old Dobbin, so you had to do the best you could and ride the truck.

Woman: In order to get the heat to it, he brought the exhaust pipe. He had three benches, one on each side and one down the middle. Then under the middle one he put in his exhaust pipe to get heat for the bus. That'd be some heat. I suppose there were some that didn't have any heat, but I'm glad for that suggestion, any others that rode the bus or truck.

Woman: That's the way ours came from down in Davis Ward, a little old thing. I don't think it was ever a chicken coop, but they called it a chicken coop.

Unknown: I remember some of those chicken coops. Mostly where I sold chickens out of, but not where they rode on the truck.

Man: As far as Jensen was concerned, the only bus I can remember was one that brought kids from the Brush Creek area down to the Jensen school. That was an old sheep wagon with a stove in it, and it was quite comfortable. They brought the kids from Brush Creek down to the Jensen school. That was somewhere around 1907, maybe 1908, but I remember that the rest of us walked to school. I always walked to school, but I remember Joe Haslem was on that bus that came from Brush Creek and he called the kids that were on the bus "brush animals." (Laughs)

Unidentified: They were? (Laughs)

Man: That was Joe's definition of them.

Woman: I've heard about in schools and things in the Jensen area, that Jeremiah Murray's family went up the creek to some kind of little schoolhouse. There was a little schoolhouse up there for a while. My sister, Irene, taught up there one winter, a school that was up near the Middleton home where Doc Middleton lived, and then later Mark Nevin, somewhere in that vicinity. That was on that Brush Creek Road.

Unidentified: Was that on the road to Jensen? This is what Joe Haslem says, that's where the first schoolhouse you had...

Man: Before that, they had this sheep wagon. They'd haul the kids down in the sheep camp

wagon. There was no bus to Vernal until after I finished high school in 1919, where kids that wanted to go to high school, there weren't very many of them, had to find a place to live in Vernal where they could do chores or something else for their board and keep. But there were no buses until, I don't remember just when, but my brother, Lynn, who is ten years younger, while he was going to high school, he drove the bus. At that time they had a bus that was running regularly, and he drove it for everyone some time. Then there was quite a stew about kids driving the bus, but he was a better driver than a lot of adults they hired later. At any rate, I can't tell a year that that bus started running from Jensen, but it was some time between 1920 and 1930.

Man: Probably '28.

Man: Could have been. I just cannot remember when it began because I wasn't going to school. But I do know that Lynn drove the bus.

Unidentified: There was a bus down there in '28. I think that's the first one, except this school wagon. I remember that was a good deal, that old sheep wagon. I rode on one of them over in Wyoming, good deal!

Woman: I was going to say as late as 19... somewhere, I'm not sure of the years, but somewhere between 1934 and '37 my father drove a school bus from Whiterocks bench up around Farm Creek and to the Alterra school building. He drove a truck with a plyboard body like a little cabin on the back of it, and he had a little wood stove about that big around that he heated that with, because we used to bring the ingredients and make fudge on the way to school on it. So even that late, over in that area, that's the kind of buses we had. Will started to school at Alterra the year it started, maybe he can tell you what he rode when we were living in Deep Creek at that time, I believe.

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Unidentified: Anybody else have anything to contribute about the old bus or wagon or truck or whatever that you first rode to school? All right. I think the first buses we had was the Goodrich. They had a school board meeting and they decided, they came over from the Bennetts in that country and asked for transportation for high school students. They talked about it quite a lot and they decided to put on some trucks over there. It wasn't long and maybe it was just about that time, they decided to set the rate of the trucks. The parents could pay \$30: they'd pay \$15 at the start of school and \$15 at the end of school and the parents would pay for the truck. That didn't go very long, or maybe didn't even start until this A.G. Goodrich offered to put on some good buses. So we got advancing pretty quick in this deal, see, and they put on three buses on that side and one to Jensen that came through Naples and Davis. He put on four buses at that time and it looks like it was in about '28 or '29 along in there, then the thing got to moving along.

Woman: 1928, that's when they got the Randlett bus. That's when they got the Jensen bus. That's when they got the Maeser. They were all yellow buses then, those buses weren't trucks because they swanked the older ones. Then....

Unidentified: That's when they first put on good buses. He put on four buses at one time.

[Various comments.]

Unidentified: Well, they went from that and they kept adding to it. As schools got to where it seemed the right thing to do, too, do away with schools, or at least when they had to transport high school students, then they put on a bus. Then they decided to do away with the Glines Ward school and transport those students up to Maeser. They decided to do away with Ashley School and put them over there at the Central School. All of these things kind of worked in and brought the thing together to where they had to build bigger schools as you see they've done. There's Discovery and all this school. But it works into a big bus system.

In 1933 the board decided that they would transport all students at the board's expense that lived over 2.5 miles and that's when the whole thing kind of... They didn't have to have more petitions in then. I find where Dry Fork come down along in '27, '28. They brought a petition down and half of them signed a petition to run a bus back up there like they had done, or truck. The other half decided they wanted their school back. So you see, the board had problems and if you go through them, I decided that they used pretty good judgement in handling these problems, putting these students in bigger and better schools. I say they were better schools, maybe they wasn't. I don't think they get any more out of them, and maybe not as much, as they did out of little old log schoolhouse, but this is the way it went anyway. We just almost had to go to bigger and better schools.

Like I was going to say, they hired a lot of trucks or buses. You'd bid for these contracts. Like from Maeser, they run a truck from Dry Fork down through that upper street on Hacking Street and down, then they did another bid from Coltons' straight on that one street and out into Glines Ward and down and picked up part of Maeser students and Glines Ward students and brought them down to the high school.

This is a bus that I bid on. I bid on that in '34 and I bid on that for \$7.75 a day. I went and bought a new truck and built this body on it and I paid for the truck. Imagine \$7.75 a day to pay for a truck, pay for all the gas and all the expense. You had to have insurance and you had to give a bond, certain time here that is in our minutes where they said they wanted the bus drivers to give a bond. I thought I was doing pretty good. I don't know whether I was dumb or born too early, but I mean, I had a little money to spend. That was during the Depression, see, and when we was trying to recover from the Depression.

Woman: Where did you run that bus, from what area?

Unidentified: From Coltons', straight out. Now Lawrence Adams picked you folks, and Byron Thomas. I started out at the grain corner out there at Coltons', way out at the little canal and drove straight through to the south all through Glines Ward and down to the high school. I didn't go up that way at all. It's interesting, very interesting. Today they're paying the bus drivers \$9.85 an hour to drive these buses! To drive a bus that costs \$52,000. Can you imagine a community...

Woman: You got \$7 and what a day?

Unidentified: \$7.75, don't forget that seventy-five cents. (Laughs) Then after about a little while, they [changed] my route a little, but and they finally got it to \$8.25, put that down, too. I don't

want you to forget that. But the thing that gets me was how I could do it. I did do it. I drove that bus, this one here, for about four years, then I went and bought a new bus with a factory body for the same price!

Woman: How much did you pay for gas?

Unidentified: About fifteen to sixteen cents.

Woman: How much did you pay for your truck?

Unidentified: I heard somebody tell me the other day that I probably paid \$1400 for it. This was a ton-and-a-half, dual-wheel truck, and you could make a forty-passenger bus of it. It's something interesting to think of. Today we've got, I'm getting a little of my story, maybe not, today we've got fifty-two buses, they cost as much as \$52,000 a piece, they spent \$695,000 to run these buses, not to pay for them, just to run them, today. That's almost three-quarters of a million dollars just to run buses when they could just as well run them for \$7.75 a day.

Woman: Inflation's taken over. That \$7.75 was worth a whole lot more than that \$9.82 that the bust drivers are getting now. The school board's pocket is getting bigger, or something. It's very interesting to me. It's so interesting that I'm glad they asked me to do this because I went in those books and I found people I knew and people who were good honest men and women and the decisions that they come up with and give me the chance to kind of look these things over, and I liked it, and I liked what I seen.

I don't like the way the kids are acting today. I don't think it compares with what they used to do, but still we used to have trouble. One little thing that happened to me in Wyoming: they had a little school, two teachers, I think, for the eight grades, but they was pretty rough teachers. Something happened some way. There was three classes in one room where we were seated and I was over on one side of the room and my sister was over on the other. We was just little kids, probably in the fourth, fifth grades, something like that. Something come up about a snowball. Now you folks know I wouldn't throw a snowball, but anyway I was accused of it. I was getting the works for it.

My sister didn't like that and she started lippping off at the teacher. The teacher went right around over to her and worked her over. I didn't like that, so I chirped up again, and she come back to me. After we got two or three turns apiece, I don't think the teacher thought she'd conquered us, I think she give out! But anyway, we forgive her, of course. We [thought] she was wrong, but we forgave and went on to school. Just one thing to kind of help make the thing a little amusing.

Unidentified: Anybody got any stories they want to tell about discipline? I'm glad they asked me to do this. Today, I told you what it costs to operate these buses. They've got 52 buses, they cost as much as \$52,000 and the state pays them. Last year, \$153,800 to depreciate these buses. So we're not so bad off after all, are we? When the state will come in a pay that much, they're keeping the buses up for us. They depreciate these buses out every ten years, and this is what they got last year from the state. Pretty good deal, about as good as riding old Dobbin, maybe. But we've got a good system. We've got good buses; they're kept up well, they look good, they

are good. I don't think the kids appreciate them like they used to old Dobbin, and I don't think they're getting any better education and maybe not as good, but it's because they don't put as much into it as we used to. Now these are my convictions. As far as I know, we've pretty well covered the thing. You know what they cost to start with. You know what you have to do to get to school. You know all you've got to do now is step out of the house and maybe walk a block and they pick you up and take you to school. I think we live in a pretty good school. I like it, I enjoy it.

Woman: Just a little interesting thing, my father drove the school bus for a lot of years up there. He would leave our home up in the mouth of Whiterocks Canyon and drive around Farm Creek and meet the high school bus at Whiterocks. So, the grade school kids that had to go to Tridell couldn't ride clear around because they missed the bus that went to Tridell, so he had to go five miles from our home down to the corner to meet the bus that went into Tridell with the grade school kids. There was not one to drive this little van that we had from our place to the corner, so when I was in the eighth grade, I started driving that bus with ten kids on it. I didn't have a driver's license and more than once, I had the fellow from Vernal sitting there on the corner watching me load up and unload, but he never, ever... I think back now, and I think, "I wonder why he didn't ask me for a driver's license or something." But he never did, and I drove that bus from the time I was in the eighth grade until I graduated from high school.

Leslie: Let me tell you the answer, you was too good-looking a young woman! That's the answer, there's no other answer.

Woman: At that time, though, I thought back and I wondered if you even needed a driver's license in those years.

Man: Wasn't that before driver's license? I think it was.

Another woman: Even though we had these go out in these areas, Larry rode five miles on horse before he caught the bus to come in twenty-five miles [to] Avalon.

Unidentified: No two of us hardly had the same condition, the same circumstances to cope with. We just had to cope with what we had. This is what makes it interesting; this is what makes the world go round. If we all lived in one place, it wouldn't have to turn very far.

Woman: You know what they do with bus drivers now? They keep them busy in the shop generally, or they can take their buses home and maybe put in a half-hour between bus drives or whatnot. But Cal Jorgans down in Avalon helped cook. He always got permission from parents to cut all the kids hair. He put in a good day's work by being generous.

Unidentified: I've got a story, Florence reminds me of the Hackings. One winter when I come to school, one year, I did get a little education, I fixed up a sleigh, just two runners, but it was quite long, ten feet long. I got one of Joe Hacking's horses. I had access to Joe's horses quite a lot, I worked for him quite a bit, and I broke it to drive and one of my ponies. And I took Joseph Haden and Lucille and Rulan, that's three of her brothers and sisters, and my two brothers and

sister and Bea Stringham, and we come to school all winter. You had sleighing nine months out of the year back in those days. That's the way we come to school. Tie the horses up and feed them and they was ready to go.

Woman: There's one more little story. When my father was driving the bus, there was about four or five Indian families that were sending their children to school at the same time that he picked up and rode with us. I said during those three or four years that we rode in that little car, I think every one of us got lice from the Indians, and had our heads washed. (Laughs) That was one of the penalties we paid for going to school, I guess.

Unidentified: It's really interesting.

Esther Campbell: My experience, too, down there when I was teaching in Twin Wash, I was in the district ten years, never thought of a school bus down there, so our car burned up one night and we rebuilt it with just a seat and a long back end. My eighth grade boy drove the car, we called it our school bus, but we had to furnish the vehicle and the gas for it to pick up all the kids, and I taught the school.

Unidentified: Well, you was getting big wages there at school, you probably got \$40 to \$50 a month!

Esther: No, at that time, they were getting high, I was getting \$90. My first year was \$50.

Unidentified: This first winter that my wife taught school, Randlett, she got \$65 a month. Of course, she had to pay her board and lodging out of that. You go up there to the school board and read the minutes and you read things. One place, there's some people from Layton and them towns come in and wanted some transportation, and they'd already arranged for a truck. They thought maybe the board would come in and pay \$100 a month to help pay for the expense of the truck, see, and come to find out, the board was already paying \$175 a month for them same kids that they'd arranged for the truck. So you have lots of conditions.

Woman: When ? Slaugh had the bus, we'd ride home at night on it and then have to walk from the O'Connor home sometimes. When the road got so bad in front of our place there, Thomas went down on the old pasture. We'd go over and catch the bus over at Bill Murray's and because the road was so swampy here on the Freestone corner, that was just impassable, you'd sink right out. We had to go clear our around the edge of the valley into Glines Ward and back in, in order to get to school.

Unidentified: I'll tell you, we've seen some interesting years. I've seen that road between here and Maeser in mud so deep you couldn't hardly pull an empty wagon up there. I was so glad when they started graveling that road. I was as glad as I used to be when Christmas came whether Santa Claus come or not.

Woman: At the time that old Goodrich was driving the truck, it was a truck with a canvas came over that way, we rode from Tridell up on the Whiterocks Bench and if any of you know what

Tridell mud is like... We used to get out, he'd drive as far as he could, then we'd get out and help him scrape the mud off the tires because he was so deep his tires wouldn't turn. This is the way we got home. Then one night, I remember Owen got to feeling a little gay from drinking on the way home. So he took all of the kids that lived up on Whiterocks Bench, he took them as far as the top of the dugway and dumped us off and turned around and come back. It was snowing. I will never forget how cold I got before I got home that night. We walked about 5 ½ miles to get home that night.

Unidentified: You see, you was developing your brain and physique all in the same day!

Woman: All the kids down our way thought all those that lived on a street where they were picked up with a bus was really something! We were called down that way "Did Valley." Everybody had kids, mostly boys, and they felt so bad because we lived far enough out that the bus didn't pick us up. The kids walked or parents took them.

Unidentified: They had a rule that you was to haul them, like I said, two and a half miles. That rule didn't apply to me. I picked them up within less than a mile of the school and hauled them to school. I just break all the rules I can break. Rules don't mean nothing to me. I'm sure there's other bus drivers just as mean, they'd break the rules.

Man: One thing of interest to me was there at my place in Jensen, the bus stopped at a certain corner there, a little less than a quarter of a mile from school. I've seen kids go out to that corner and wait for a bus and stand there and nearly freeze to death waiting for the bus to come when they could've walked to the school in half of the time they waited.

Unidentified: Yeah, but they wouldn't have got that ride!

Woman: What kind of discipline did you have on your bus?

Unidentified: Not too bad. I had one or two families. You see, I had a different deal. I was driving the bus for high school kids. Then they decided to take the school away from them and put the district school students back up to Maeser, so they let me go around through Glines and Maeser and pick up the high school and bring them back there, turn right around and come back over the same route and pick up the other kids. Well, you know how the people thought when they took the school away from their district, and you knew who got a lot of the bumps. I've had them set tacks, nails for my tires, everything.

Now, certain families was fine, but you'd have maybe one family that resented all of that to the extent that they'd give you all the trouble that they could. I've kicked one fellow's kids off of the bus so they had to get a permit from the superintendent. The next morning her dad was there and he was a fighting man and he got right up in the bus. I said, "Get right off of my bus, buddy, and stay off, I'm under bond to run this bus and you get off and you stay off." I had a tire iron right there, and he got out. That didn't happen very much. I'm glad, I wouldn't want the job again.